131 631 133 36 [161] pattern is similar to that of the central part. Villages are scattered throughout the area with population distribution comparable with the central area. Before the war, the densities here were over one thousand per square mile, actually considerably more if the uninhabitable lands are subtracted.[4]

The Settlement

How long this settlement pattern and these regional differences have existed is difficult to say. In studying contemporary environments, like 311 Okinawa, which bear the imprint of long human settlement, it is useful to try to reconstruct the nature of the landscape before the interference of man. At one time, the whole island, with the exception of stony, rocky, and shallow soils and beach and marsh land was covered with forest. There are now no virgin stands. "It is evident that the present forest has been cut over many times. There seems to be no part of the island in which the forest cover has not been disturbed in some way by man."[5] In this light, the regional differences between the forested north and the deforested south are the work of man.

361 [173] [174] [161] The oldest settlements are thought to have been in the Naha and Shuri areas. Kudaka Island, off the southeast coast, according to one legend, was the site of the supernatural creation of the Okinawan people. The town of Unten, the Port Melville of Captain Hall and Commodore Perry, was, in one version, the scene of the landing of the Japanese warrior, Tametomo, but this was in the twelfth century. Northern areas were inhabited prior to the unification of the island in the twelfth century because they had their own regional chieftans before this. But the population of the north, at least up to the war, has been sparse and scattered. If the forests are any indication, it has been the central and southern regions which have been the scenes of longest settlement. Probably the [177] [178] settlement pattern had not changed much until the Japanese interventions of the nineteenth century and the great changes coming with the recent war, and with the extensive modifications which the Americans have made in the landscape of the central region.

3

General Climatic Conditions

132 In the Köppen system, Okinawa has a humid subtropical climate. It is a rainy climate with no marked dry season; it has a mild winter and the temperature of the warmest month is over 71.6°F. The average annual temperatures in Naha range from 61° for January and February to 82°F for July and August, and the range from the mean minimum of 55° in February to the

[Text Continues Top of P. 14--Analyst]

4 See the population distribution maps in CA Handbook, Ryukyu (Loo-choo Islands, 48-49.

5 Okinawan Forests. (Prepared by the USGS, Military Geology Section under the direction of Office of the Engineer, GHQ, Far East Command), 1948, 2.

of Okinawan prehistory will probably depend on research throughout a wide area and on the comparison and collation of discoveries already made in western Japan, south Korea, Quelpart Island, the Shantung peninsula, the Ryukyu Islands, Formosa, and China, particularly concerning the role of Fukien province in later times, to say nothing of determining the sources and routes of influences from southeastern Asia on Japan and the Ryukyus. Links with Polynesia and Hawaii have been suggested. Obviously present day political conditions are unfavorable for this type of inquiry.

The suppositions of which we have been speaking have led to the belief that the Ryukyu people, like the Japanese, are composed of the North Mongoloid, South Mongoloid or Malayan, and the Ainu type, but that the proportions are different, since there seem to be larger elements of the Malayan and Ainu types in the Ryukyu Islands. Whether these reconstructions are correct or not, the significant fact is that the islands owed their peopling to migration and invasion, and that culture mixture and contact is of very ancient origin.[2]

The Ryukyuan creation myth is a crystallization of ideas that must have been long dominant at the time they were recorded. There are two versions of this myth, one simple, the other, as Spencer points out, more complex and probably reflecting the influence of new and foreign ideas. The first of these versions appears in Ryukyu Shindoki, written about 1603 A.D., the second in the Kyu Yo, a Chinese translation of a work by Haneji Tomohide entitled Chusan Seikan (1650).[3]

[Text continues top of p. 28--Analyst]

2 Bishop, C. W. The historical geography of early Japan. Geo. Rev. 13 (1923), 40-63. See also this author's, The geographical factor in the development of Chinese civilization. Geo. Rev. 12 (1922), 19-41. For a recapitulation of the theories regarding the peopling of the Ryukyus, see Marshall T. Newman and Roman L. English, The Ryukyuan people: a biological appraisal. Amer. Journ. of Physical Anthropology, 5 (1947), 114-24, and Binkenstein, R. Okinawa-Studien. Monumenta Nipponica, 3(1940), 196 ff. and the literature there cited. Chamberlain's ideas are summarized in The Luchu islands and their inhabitants. Geo. Journ. 5 (1895), 316-19. R. S. Spencer, The Noro, or priestesses of Loo Choo. Trans. Asiatic Society of Japan. 2d Series. 8 (1931), 94-112, especially p. 94. For a recapitulation of Ryukyuan history, see C. A. Handbook, as cited, 13-31 and John R. Potter, A Preface to Liu Ch'iuan history: an analysis of the basis for establishing a United Nation's Trusteeship. (Unpublished Master's Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1948. Leavenworth, Charles S. The Loochoo Islands. Shanghai, 1905.

3 This discussion is based on the article by Spencer cited above. Partial translations of the myths from the sources are reproduced here. See also Binkenstein, Okinawa-Studien, as cited, 198.

In the first version, a male person (Shinerikyu) and a female person (Amamikyu) descended from Heaven. Amamikyu without sexual intercourse gave birth to three children: the first son became the first ruler; the first daughter, the first priestess; and the second son, the first farmer.

In the second version, the male and female deities gave birth to a child. "They carried stones and earth to the edge of the sea and planted trees to keep back the waves." Mountains and forests thus made, "mankind sprung up." Knowledge was attained and one person divided mankind into classes. This man, Tenteishi, had five children: Tensonshi, the first son and first ruler; the second son, the first noble (ansu); the third son, the first farmer. The eldest daughter became the first kikoe-oh-gimi, who later headed the institutionalized noro religious system. The second daughter became the first priestess (noro).

The dynasty established by Tensonshi, according to tradition, lasted for twenty-five generations, 17,802 years, or until 1187 A. D. During this period, Okinawa was divided into three districts (magiri), Kunchan in the north, Nakagami in the center and Shimajiri in the south, divisions which remain to this day.[4] The districts were divided into mura or townships. "Wheat and millet were raised at Kutaka /a name of a magiri/ and rice was grown at Chinen and Tamagusuku."[5] There is reason to believe that Tensonshi dynasty had its greatest control over what would now be the area of Naha, Shuri, Tamagusuku township, and the Chinen peninsula area.

In both myths, a female priesthood, as Spencer points out, is placed at the very beginning of Ryukyuan history. A king, lesser nobles, a female priesthood, and farmers were the basis of the culture.

3

Events of the Early Historical Period

Not enough is known of the early historical contacts between the Great Loochoo and the Chinese and Japanese to warrant any conclusions regarding influences which these countries could have exerted.

Chinese punitive expeditions took place in the early seventh century A. D., but the consensus of opinion is that the invasion of Great Loochoo resulted in no prolonged cultural contact or influence. Some Japanese

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 29 -- Analyst]

4 Chamberlain, The Luchu Islands and their inhabitants, as cited, 306.

5 Leavenworth, Charles S. The Loochoo islands, 15. Quotation is from the manuscript history translated by Leavenworth, ibid, 77.

to the family system, the extended family, or to the household order naming system is well worth exploring. No tattooing was observed among the Hinatogawa fishermen, but this may have been an oversight. According to an old woman there, it did exist. One would expect it from the close relationship of Hinatogawa to Itoman. It is quite probable, in my opinion, that tattooing of men and women have different origins.

According to the early observers, tattooing of women took place around puberty, although Furness puts the age at 4 or 5 years. Patterns differed distinctly by island.

In Okinawa, everywhere one hears the same explanation for the origin of women's tattooing. Although there are variants, the core of the explanation is that the Ryukyu islanders (presumably after the Satsuma conquest of 1609) tattooed their young girls to prevent their being carried off to brothels in Japan. The tattooing was supposed to have made the girls so unattractive that they were untouched. Other variations are that the tattoo indicated marriage and thus kept the girl from being taken away. An old woman of Hinatogawa told of a legend (not seen or heard from any other source) in which the tattooing of women was an act of thanksgiving for a rescue at sea. A boat was sinking, and the survivors swimming saw two hands in the sky. They stopped the waves and the storm passed, permitting the swimmers to reach shore easily. The families were told, and after that the hands of the women were tattooed.

This subject needs considerable research. It would be of great interest to know the relationship, if any, to the family system, the extended family, and the household order naming system, whether it is comparatively recent in the islands, and whether the tattooing of the fisherman is a result of Chinese or Portugese influences and a consequence of the early Pacific trade described in Chapter II.

11

Knuckle Cracking

One of the most puzzling of Okinawan mannerisms is the frequency of knuckle cracking. It may be observed in young children from 5 to 6 to old men and women in their seventies. It is done on so many occasions that cataloging them would be a real chore. The knuckle is cracked crisply and sharply. Young boys and girls may talk a whole evening, cracking their knuckles incessantly. It occurs in ordinary conversation, at lively parties, and during periods when a conversation lags. Children say they learned it from their mothers.

It seems a habit acquired very early. Perhaps it is an indication of tension, but I am inclined to be less specific. One Okinawan explained it as a continuation of childhood habit and ascribed it to the limberness of the fingers coming from early training on the abacus,

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

1

Introduction

The study of religious ideas in Okinawa quickly involves one in a quagmire of beliefs, formal observances, and conventions, of various origins, often grafted on one another, so that it is almost impossible to disentangle them. There is a vagueness among the people, a lack of distinctions among various types of belief, and this makes the analysis even more uncertain and subject to error. When after death, for example, does the deceased become a god (hotoke-sama) in the Buddhist pantheon? At the end of the 49th day when the temporary white tablets are burned and replaced by the permanent red ones? Or at the end of the 33rd year when the dead person is no longer mourned, and the anniversary of his death no longer observed? And is he regarded as a god in the Buddhist pantheon or simply as a god? I was unable to find satisfactory answers to these questions.

Religious beliefs, such as ancestor worship, are closely related to the underlying ideas of the family system. Praying to the ancestors at the god shelf ties Buddhism in with the family system, but worship at the Buddhist alter and the god shelf would, if accepted at its face value, give an erroneous idea of the vitality of Buddhism and the degree to which it has become a religion of the people.

The student of these matters must also make certain that this vagueness and mixing of religious belief is an actuality and does not arise out of faulty comprehension. I became convinced, however, that the vagueness, the compounding of beliefs from different sources, the uncertainty are realities, and this point of view was later reinforced in reading the works of students of an earlier age.

There is a noticeably sharp cleavage in belief between the old and the young, with the dividing line around the age of 55. Furthermore, among the old, it is the women who believe and worship. The old men are much less serious, and, except for the few antiquarians, are much more poorly informed.

2

Contemporary Religious Beliefs

The religious tradition of Okinawa is a feminine one. Women appear in the creation myth as the practitioners of religion. The priestess (noro) system became an institutionalized religion in the early 16th century. From that time until the very recent past, the priestesses have been strong and influential because, for one thing, they had property and the economic power that accompanied its possession. These priestesses have now largely disappeared. But women remain the chief repositories of religious knowledge and belief.